PEAKS OF SHALA

756 609 The shouts redoubled, rifles cracked from every rock, the church bell wildly rung, and through the clamor, deafened and a little dizzy, we came into the village of Thethis. The four chiefs, having greeted us ("Long life to you! Glory to your feet! Glory to the trails that brought you!" they said) preceded us up the last breathless quarter of a mile of trail, and all along the way the boys turned handsprings on the cliff tops.

361 The village of Thethis is built on the plateau that tops the gigantic, shiplike rock wedged in the narrow head of Shala Valley. All around it rise the mountains, snow capped, seamed with white waterfalls like rich quartz with streaks of silver; the shadows of them lie almost all day long across the village. Thethis itself is perhaps thirty large, oblong stone houses scattered at wide intervals on the flat land, and all the land is divided neatly into squares by stone fences—some fields for corn, some for grain, some for meadow. In the midst stands the church, two stories, oblong and gray like the houses, and a network of trodden paths leads to it.

It seemed a quiet, peaceful place. But on the mountains above it to the north the Serbian armies lay; their mountain-trained eyes were doubtless watching us as we crossed the sodden fields. This is the village, these are the chiefs, whose houses were destroyed by a company of soldiers sent from the struggling Albanian government in Tirana. The Serbs held the Albanian

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs
Historical Yugoslavia EF2
Historical Bulgaria EE2
Albania EG1
Croats EF4

open locks; plants which revivify by touch; plants which stupefy if they are trodden on; plants which can kill by mere contact. The conception of the Blessed Virgin was brought about, says a legend, by the Angel Gabriel striking her with a sprig of basil, upon which God had breathed. It is a theme paralleled in the ritual striking of the household with basil during or after prayer. There are endless folk-tales of similar parthenogenesis.

The folk-doctor, who is at the same time a seer, brings about this contact, and will then sometimes prescribe a further use of the herb. This was the case with an Albanian herb doctor near Peć, who, when giving out herbs to his patients, first lightly touched them with it on hands or head, and then detailed the preparation of this or that decoction or elixir. This formal introduction of patient to plant expresses the same idea as the gathering or other preparation of a medicine specially for a particular person, sometimes using spells or formulae introducing the patient's name, or selecting the plant to correspond with some characteristic of the patient, such as the 'female' varieties for women, and the 'male' for men. In the list of cures, a number of simple applications are included which cannot conceivably have much effect even upon the epidermis. These appear to be akin to the phylacteries, or Slavonic *nauzy*. For such reasons, if no other, the folk-herbalist, unlike the modern doctor, must also provide the plant himself, and carry it with him, or pick it specially. At Otok, in Dalmatia, the 'doctors'—who were mostly in league with or protected by the nymphs—dispensed their herbs under a fairy walnut tree. The doctor must know the name of his patient, who must either come himself or send a few threads of his shirt or three hairs of his head. The doctor, having said certain secret prayers, laid the plant on the sick man; but if the patient sent a messenger, he must receive the plant in the open and take it into the house himself, even if he was so ill that his friends must carry him into the yard to do so. The messenger must on no account enter any house with the plant before he had given it to the patient,

5; Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Croats EF4
Montenegrins EF5
Albania EG1
Bulgaria EE1
Contemporary Macedonians EF8

country, like the famous Sadik Sadiković who has published a book, a mixture of popular literature and tradition. An Albanian doctor near Peć is known throughout Metohija and Northern Albania, and has been sent for as far as Kossovo and Skoplje in his time. The descendants of families who have enjoyed a century or more of fame still practise—the Medikovići, the Karamanovići, Lelkovići, etc. (for further examples see Gl.Z.M. XII, p. 65).

It is some special secret, knowledge or experience that qualifies the healer, whether he employ rational means or sorcery, or both. This can be efficaciously combined with natural gifts; second sight, relationship or friendship with the disease demons, power to separate soul from body. Power can be obtained by hatching a familiar (a cock after ten years lays an egg, which if carried about for forty days under the left armpit will hatch out a small, obedient familiar: details of course vary). Or again, by touching with the left forefinger the horn of a snail on Whitsun morning, the Bulgarian and East Serbian seeress becomes possessed of a healing finger, or rather, exorcising finger. On Zlatibor a woman puts the little finger of her left hand on the first snail in spring and says: 'As this snail draws back its horn so may every sickness that my finger touches draw back.' She is then able to heal (*zavarčati*, to *turn* illness). The stick which has separated a snake from a frog that it was about to eat henceforth has magical and healing power. At Otok to be lucky (*hasna*) in healing, the doctoress (*bajalica*) should stand on a snake's neck and strike its head with the left forefinger until the snake dies.[1]

The Mohammedan Sherbetli of Macedonia served an apprenticeship to a sheikh, observing constant fasts, praying and leading a virtuous life. When he had qualified, the master gave him his hand (*el vermek*), that is, passed on his power to him.[2] The people generally distinguish very sharply be-

[1] Cf. J. Lovretić, *op. cit.*; S.E.Z. IX, etc.

[2] T. Djordjević, *Iz Turskog Folklora*, Godišnjica Nikole Čupića (1905), pp. 265, etc.

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Albania EG1

S
756
563
124

race, but they also part with information for *sevap* (charity), out of gratitude for another service, or as a courtesy due to the sacred character of a guest. With many practising village seers and doctresses, it is impossible to learn anything, or at best a carefully edited version. All sorts of excuses are made; the priest has forbidden them to spread their superstitions, they have ceased from practice, or forgotten their art; they fear ill-luck, or most discouraging of all, 'You gentry don't believe in our peasant cures. They will do you no good.' Or: 'What can a poor old woman tell you? The doctors know better than we do.' Then, if the investigator really wants to get at the bottom of things, he must either apply for help as a patient himself, or, if his appearance might be against him, especially in the case of a man, he should send someone else whom he can trust. Spells are sometimes refused, too, because of the use of obscene words and gestures.

A
756
763
124

Once an old operator was dying, and sent for me to see him. Not long before I had visited his house and questioned him. He held my hands while he told me about the plants which he used for salves; and when it came to telling of his manipulations he desired to show me, as well as he could for his extreme weakness, on my own limbs. Perhaps he had some idea that in this way he passed on his power, for when I feared that he might weary under the enormous effort which he was making, and someone standing by, misunderstanding, suggested that he bothered the visitor, he insisted upon doing it in his own way. I would gladly have had him leave all until he felt better, for the women of three generations of his family were already crouching on the floor and weeping, but apparently it was very much on his mind, and he half hoped that this very action might hasten recovery, or as one of his daughters whispered to me, set free his soul. (This particular was a little surprising, for these people were Albanian Moslems and I did not know that they held these views regarding death-bed confession.) The old man said: 'If I live, I will teach you all I know, and show you everything. But now I must do as much as I can in case I die.

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Albania EG-I

Swear that you will make only good use of what I tell you, that it be not a sin for me before God. Perhaps you will be able to tell me how to cure my disease and so more than repay me. Then I shall be able to tell you in a better way. But in any case I give you my secret now.'

A different case was my friend Ram Smail, another Albanian, and an unexpectedly patient collaborator. While I used to wander with him in the mountains near Peć, he picked the various herbs he knew, and explained their uses. He said one day: 'I am going to Asia. If you need me I will come back, or I will come to your country or I will send you herbs from Asia. I do this in friendship, because you are a stranger. I also shall be a stranger in Asia. I would not tell anyone from these parts. You go about unarmed, but what I tell you is a weapon. . . . I am leaving, besides, so it does not matter what you do afterwards.' In other words, I could inherit his practice, and, as he had more enemies than friends there owing to old feuds, he did not care if I killed off the whole population, once he was clear.

Many a man has learned the art of bone-setting or massage by watching others at work. The hospital servant and *feltscher* type of popular doctor are just as much respected as the self-taught or the inheritor of a tradition. A Serbian official document of 1836 mentions a certain Gavril Savić and his wife 'who, having suffered for a long time from wounds, have learned these remedies through treating themselves'. As a matter of fact anyone who knows a certain medicine or incantation can freely apply it, but on the principle that in this, as in all other things, some are 'lucky' and some are not, and a charm which may work with one may fail if recited by another. Hence the extreme care in guarding the monopoly of such secrets has a materialistic ground as well as a superstitious one. It is noteworthy that in many respects the same attitude is felt towards the priest. He owes his importance to his knowledge of prayers, to his reading and writing, and less to any belief in the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying-on of hands. In the absence of a

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Croats EF4
Albania EG1

These, with the knives of circumcision, complete the armamentarium of Turkish surgery in these parts.

The peasant doctor, on the other hand, seldom has any special instruments, but employs ordinary knives, sharp stones, crystals, thorns, lumps of sugar, needles, coins, and what he himself can make out of wood, such as splints. Here and there a special silver needle is kept for acupuncture and inoculation. Feathers are used in applying salves. The sorcerer or seeress has generally a black-handled knife, which should be made or specially or ritually prepared; and the rest of the paraphernalia is selected from objects in common use.

The barbers and travelling doctors have a fixed scale of charges, and so have many village specialists. When a man cannot pay immediately, he is required to leave a pledge. Such specialists can draw patients from a great distance, and make considerable profits, though in fear of restrictions, due, they say, to the jealousy of the gentlemen doctors. Most of them provide the drug, or prepare it specially for each patient; many keep a stock of their standard ointment or medicine; some only give advice and oral prescriptions. At Otok it was believed that the doctors would lose the protection of the *vile* if they charged more than a certain minimum fee. Those who write charms, and these are mostly Mohammedan *hodjas*, have also a fixed tariff.

Before the coming of qualified doctors to Serbia (first in 1819) who, until the foundation of the Medical Faculty at Belgrade in 1920, were trained abroad, and in early times were exclusively foreigners, the arts of healing were practised regularly by various native self-taught doctors, folk-doctors proper, and by travelling specialists, such as the *kaliatroi* from Epirus. These latter, whose learning was generally hereditary, travelled mostly in groups, and as far as Bosnia and Serbia. Members of this old school are still found in remoter places of the South and in Albania. In the provinces under Turkey the same system continued until very recent years, with here and there an oriental trained doctor in the towns.

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Croats EF4
Albania EG1

C S 278 757 sublimate of arsenic. Amongst the internal remedies of this class I found a mixture of gall nuts, flour and water, made into pellets about the size of peas, one of which is taken daily for a period of forty days. Half a kilogram of barley, a handful of lime and the fibre of a ripe maize cob are cooked slowly in a litre of water until the barley is soft, and drunk frequently as soon as the first symptoms of gonorrhoea have been recognised. In Hercegovina the treatment of syphilis C 278 757 in the early stages is to take a small quantity of two parts of sugar with one part of sulphur, to which some copper sulphate may be added, for seven mornings or until pustules appear on the skin. Sores are treated with sulphate of copper and sour milk or sour cabbage brine, or sprinkled with the salt and bound up with a sour cabbage leaf, or sprinkled with the ashes of a hedgehog roasted alive or a small viper. Pills of sulphur, copper sulphate, carnation, barley flour and lemon juice are eaten once to three times daily, while pills of mercury, arsenic, carnation, barley flour and lemon juice, or of mercury, dog's hair, arsenic, barley flour and lemon juice are used for fumigation. A little carnation, sulphate of copper, dry, white, dog's excrement are powdered and a small quantity blown through a tube into the back of the patient's throat, and a glass of cold water drunk immediately afterwards. This is done daily until the disease makes its appearance on the surface of the body, and then the same powder, which has been mixed with sour milk and left to stand for twenty-four hours in a copper dish, is rubbed on the skin. C [751] Dog's excrement is used for fumigation, and dog's blood and meat as a prophylactic. Fumigation with mercury alone is known in most provinces, and fumigation with gall S [278] [563] nuts, mercury and flour occurs. The Bosnian Mohammedans make pills for fumigation. An old man at Dečani does a trade with cakes for fumigation; they weigh about three ounces and are about two inches in diameter and flat, oval in shape. A 278 756 Boots, fire-arms, coats, generally the characteristic property of Albanian highlanders, may be seen hanging in the wretched house of this patriarch, now nearly ninety, which have been

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Albania EG1
Turkey MB1
Montenegrins EF5

left as pledges during treatment. The pills are a mixture of mercury and hen or goose dung, sometimes with fir resin, which has been baked in the sun or over a very slow fire on a flat brick or piece of iron. These are inhaled by the sufferer under a cloth, ten days running, while the patient keeps a strict diet, avoiding salt and strong meat. The following drug is taken three times a day for nine days in all venereal complaints: half a litre of *rakia*, some chalk, alum, camphor, and a spoonful of olive oil mixed and left to go sour; or nine insects found on an elm tree (*striži buba*) are roasted on a fire shovel and powdered and drunk in *rakia*. Some years ago a charlatan in the Smederevo district used to sell a mixture of these insects and powdered glass in brandy to the villagers.

Stern mentions that, in Turkey, in which he included the territory now under discussion, henna entered into the composition of antiluetic medicines. For this there is no evidence that I could discover in recent traditional medicine in the places he mentions, nor as far as I know is henna used in fumigation at all.

Herbs are also used for fumigation, e.g. *Sedum telephium*, and others known as *Frenga trava*. The common coltsfoot has been pointed out to me as a specific.

ULCERS, GANGRENE

Cancer, ulcers, gangrene, lupus, festering wounds, etc., are mainly treated as special cases of wounds. Beliefs about animal parasites, etc., have already been discussed in an earlier part.

A folk-doctor is reported to have cut out a cancerous growth on the upper lip and cauterised the wound with a red-hot iron. He then applied an ointment and, when the ulcer reappeared later in the same place, he inserted a piece of arsenic and bound up the wound. At the present time a doctor has become famous in Montenegro, and as far as Berane, for curing cancer (*rak*) by cutting away the growth and binding on green figs 'with other herbs'. This method he

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Albania EG1

5
121

with fresh opportunities and new objects. Contrast the uniformity of the magic and ritual of isolated groups, such as the Australians, with the richer material of Negro medicine and the even more elaborate systems of European and Asiatic magic and religion. The process of incorporation can be extended in all directions, and even general theories may be constructed to cover a whole series of practices. *Medressi*-educated Mohammedans, who are often widely read in occult arts and ancient medicine, peasant doctors and seers, occasionally invent or experiment, or think out a logical, all-embracing theory. These individuals are men rather than women. I recall a young Albanian at Peć who was an excellent representative of this type. There was not the least doubt that he was exceedingly intelligent and really studious or even scholarly. He possessed about a hundred fine manuscripts, some of his own copying, and a few printed books, and his chief studies were alchemy and the origin of language. His experiments also included getting into touch with spirits and devils, and finding out new methods of prediction, which he tested experimentally.

A
[756]
[787]
[791]

The treatment of disease I described as markedly symptomatic. Diagnosis and cure are seldom combined into a system. When that happens the system or theory then becomes a general standardised method of handling characteristic diseases, the direction being given by one of the more obvious symptoms. The immediateness of approach otherwise is a method of trial and error, that might encourage empirical discovery. This is the only form of the experiment in common use. It is not systematised into experiment under varying conditions to discover the nature of a phenomenon, but it is a practical trial of the means of exploiting it. The process may be repeated when a case understood to be identically the same occurs again. It should be noticed that while quite different diseases may be considered as internal and external forms, for instance, of one and the same disease, the time of day, the age or name of the patient, and so on may alter the notion of what constitutes identical circumstances, or the place where an